

finally relented and they were married, but the story of their marriage is a poignant one. Pusey's growing asceticism quenched Maria's natural vivacity, as she strove to follow his austere example. She died of tuberculosis in 1839; her death did not cause his gloom, as Liddon suggested, but intensified it.

A second valuable feature of this study is its account of the young Pusey's visits to Germany and the favourable impression first made on him by the higher criticism which he met there. Further, it was characteristic of him that he devoted himself to the learning of Oriental languages and returned to England an accomplished semitic scholar. His 'innate conscientiousness and admiration of German thoroughness', as Forrester remarks, had enabled him to 'fulfil tasks which would have daunted an average person' (p. 45). All the same, this enthusiasm for German theology did not last, for he came to fear that its method would encourage unbelief.

Thirdly, Forrester brings out instructively Pusey's emerging place within the Oxford movement. The irony of the Tractarians being called Puseyites is well-known: Pusey had initialled his Tract to distinguish himself from others. Moreover, his background helped him sympathise with the old conservative High Church party, of whom Keble and Newman were critical, in spite of his emotional and intellectual attachment to their dynamic Anglicanism. It should be remembered as well that he had Evangelical convictions that the experience in Germany, although later denied, had been formative. So it was this very instinct for comprehensiveness which marked him out as leader by 1850.

It is not possible to do justice to this book by fastening on these points alone. Its strength lies in the rounded portrait it displays of a warm, if ascetic, personality with wide-ranging interests, social, political, and missionary, as well as ecclesiastical. And if, as Forrester argues, Pusey's viewpoint was fully formed by 1850, it would nonetheless be valuable to see how it revealed itself thereafter. I hope he can be persuaded to turn to that task.

RODERICK STRANGE

**ATHEIST PRIEST? DON CUPITT AND CHRISTIANITY** by Scott Cowdell, *SCM Press*. 1988. Pp. xix + 103. £6.50.

As a simple 'man in the pew', the writings of academic theologians—especially those of Cupitt's ilk—have left me with a distinct sense of scepticism and produced in me a strong feeling of nausea; as a philosopher of religion in the 'analytic' tradition I have found such writings strange and the arguments presented lacking in rigour. Mr. Cowdell writes at the beginning of his 'Conclusion' (p. 83): 'I hope that I have demystified Don Cupitt somewhat in this study and offered a broader perspective on his more controversial views'. It is to the author's credit that he can rightfully claim to have done this and hence alleviated some of my initial scepticism and illuminated aspects of Cupitt's writing that I at least had formerly found strange. One would however have hoped for more, in a way which I will explain later.

The book certainly fills a gap in the literature; it is of considerable benefit to have (i) the development of Cupitt's thinking reconstructed; (ii)

virtually a complete list of Cupitt's publications 1961–1987; (iii) a biographical sketch; (iv) a 'Forward' by Cupitt himself; the latter clearly revealing the amount of independent work the author has put into this study.

The book is divided into three main chapters with a 'Conclusion' at the end of the deliberations. The first chapter takes us through the 'early Cupitt' and is rightfully divided into two stages; *The Worlds of Science and Religion* forming the terminus of the first stage with Cupitt's attempts to seek knowledge of God via, as our author neatly puts it, 'the cancelling of one set of religious images and symbols by another' and the attempt in some sense to retain a religious cosmology. In the second phase we begin with *The Leap of Faith* and Cupitt's relocation of the transcendent entirely beyond the reach of human knowing. It takes us through Cupitt's search after the historical Jesus hidden 'beneath the kerygmatic accretions' (p. 14), the gradual diminution of this theme, and the development of a philosophy of the spirit in which the capacity for self-transcending thought is basic. This second phase of the 'early Cupitt' is in effect completed by *Taking Leave of God* in which, readers will recall, the 'objective' existence of God is cast out as being 'in doubt' theologically, of no further religious use, and God simply becomes the 'religious concern' reified—the demands and promises of spirituality in coded form with the spiritual accent being on the present life and not on the life of the world to come. Here there is strong emphasis on an individualistic spirituality; Christian belief becomes individual commitment to religious values. Cupitt's rejection of 'theological realism' here sets the background for his later rejection of *all* forms of realism (cf. especially *The Long-Legged Fly*).

The second chapter takes us from *The World to Come*, through *The Sea of Faith*, *Only Human*, and *Life Lines*, to that most demanding of Cupitt's works, *The Long-Legged Fly*. Cowdell has a somewhat easier time in tracing Cupitt's development in this chapter, since, as he himself points out, the later period is 'more thematically unified', more 'linear', hence easier to treat than the diversity of the earlier period. The reader will find the short section (pp. 25–27) in which he treats of some major themes of the later period helpful. As in the previous chapter there are useful summaries and on-going discussions of Cupitt's work; the layman will find the summary and comments on *The Long-Legged Fly* quite an eye-opener.

The third chapter, headed 'Cupitt in Retrospect: Credibility, Adequacy, Orthodoxy' was the chapter I was most looking forward to reading but frankly found disappointing both in regard to (a) organisation and (b) content. Under the heading of 'A Credible Programme?' (pp. 56ff.) we are treated to a variety of criticisms under such sub-headings as: 'Straw men?'; 'Realism versus Constructivism?'; 'A Lingering Metaphysics?'. But these criticisms are produced without any clear pattern of ordering, and to produce them under the heading of questions leads to a certain laxity. At the end of discussions under these headings we are rarely faced with any conclusion or indeed anything definite (e.g. pp. 62–3). I would have thought that discussion (e.g.) of whether Cupitt's programme was a credible one, would *first* raise the question of the validity of the various presuppositions Cupitt makes at the various stages of development sketched by the author. The validity of such presuppositions is not an issue

raised and its omission should be explained. As regards the content of the criticisms, it is fair to say that Cowdell produces a good selection from the writings of Cupitt's many critics and attempts to be fair to Cupitt himself, suggesting possible responses etc. But the discussion in general lacks depth (e.g. pp. 66–7), and one would like to have seen the author develop a firm line (or firm lines) of argument of his own rather than almost totally rely on others such that his contribution, as far as *content* is concerned, reads like a series of mini-appendages to the writings of the great as opposed to a seriously worked out programme of which he is the master. I think Cowdell missed a great opportunity here and hopefully he will take up such a challenge in the future.

The title of the book is 'Atheist Priest?'. Cowdell does not hold the view that 'Cupitt is no Christian and should give up the priesthood', unlike Hebblethwaite and Edwards. It is not the place of a reviewer to comment on the second matter here, but on the first Cowdell's book has helped me to come to a more definite view. In order not to prejudice the reader I shall not divulge it. Let me say, however, that I do not hold with Cowdell that 'Atheism is in the eye of the beholder'; if it were such then anything whatsoever would count as believing in God; but not anything whatsoever does.

The book is nicely produced and reasonably priced at £6.50.

MICHAEL DURRANT

**MINISTRY AND AUTHORITY IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** by  
Edmund Hill OP. *Geoffrey Chapman*. London, 1988. Pp. 142.

Edmund Hill is an academic of considerable quality who has spent all his priestly life teaching theology within the Church, first, for a relatively short time in England, and then for a much greater time in Southern Africa. During this latter period in particular the humanity and the freshness of his thinking stands out. It is born of care for those who suffer—the poor of spirit—and experience of the living Scripture in the hearts of those to whom he has spent a lifetime preaching it. To this brew is added the inherited culture of an old-fashioned liberalism, now turned to radicalism, and a scholarly knowledge of the early Church used in much the same way and to the same effect. Out of all this as a living witness comes this book; out of all this comes an anger with those dimensions of Catholicism which tend to negate and destroy its inspiration, its life, its vitality—its fidelity to Christ's vision of the Kingdom expressed in his Sermon on the Mount.

The author's concern is with Authority, and its use and abuse, within the Church. He characterises two concepts of it which he calls *magisterial papalist* and *ministerial collegialist* and he makes it clear right from the beginning that he sees the latter as the authentic form of authority within the Church. Others have trod a similar path before him, for example Leonardo Boff with his exciting, but unfortunately fanciful, contrast between the Latin *potestas* and the Greek *exousia*. If the 18th and 19th Chapters of John had shown Pilate speaking Latin and Jesus replying in Greek this might have had some mileage! Hill's scholarship is much better founded and he uses the New Testament to devastating effect to show not only that God's authority in his Church is above all else essentially ministerial